



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, *Chairman*

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

June 12, 2018

REQUEST: Demolition Hearing One – Determination of Architectural Significance

ADDRESS: 1326 Hollins Street – Rear/1327 Booth Street (Union Square Historic District)

RECOMMENDATION: Determination that building retains architectural integrity and is a contributing building in the historic district

STAFF: Walter W. Gallas, AICP

APPLICANT/OWNER: JJI, LLC/Steven Troy

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

Union Square Historic District: The building is at the rear of the property at 1326 Hollins Street. Its address is 1327 Booth Street. It is located between S. Carey Street to the east and S. Calhoun Street to the west (*Images 1-4*). The Union Square local historic district is a dense area of rowhouses and commercial structures located in Southwest Baltimore. Two major features define the district: Union Square Park, a donation to the city in the 1840s, and Hollins Market with the city's oldest market building. Generally bounded by South Schroeder, West Pratt, South Fulton, and West Baltimore Streets, the area of approximately 21 blocks is comprised of over 1,000 buildings. The district is built on a hierarchical street-grid system laid down over gently sloping terrain by engineer-surveyor Thomas H. Poppleton following the land's 1816 annexation to the city.

Site Conditions/Architectural Description: The building is located on the south side of Booth Street not far from S. Calhoun Street. It is a single masonry two-story two-bay alley house with a basement window and five concrete steps leading to the front door. The window and door openings are boarded. The second floor windows have brick lintels; the lintel over the first floor window appears to have been patched over. The masonry is covered in peeling paint. A brick cornice is at the roof edge; the sides have no windows (*Images 5-7*). The rear—the portion facing the rear yard of 1326 Hollins Street—is enveloped in heavy vegetation. The rear openings mimic the Booth Street side, but these openings are not boarded, so the building is open to the weather (*Image 8*). The rear wall and the east wall appear to have been stuccoed, but it is in poor repair. The west wall is painted. A fire damaged the building at some point. CHAP files don't record when the fire occurred, but it has had this appearance for more than ten years, as can be seen in a December 2007 Google Street View (*Image 9*). A pair of attached two-story alley houses, located to east, to the Carey Street end of the block are the only two other two-story structures on this side of the street (*Image 10*). The north side of Booth Street

is comprised of the rear service entry ways for the three-story commercial buildings on W. Baltimore Street (*Images 11-12*).

BACKGROUND

There are no records in the CHAP files specifically for the rear building at 1326 Hollins Street. For the main building, CHAP files show:

April 6, 1984 – Commission approved rehabilitation plans for Hollins Street building.

April 9, 1984 – CHAP issues Notice to Proceed for Commission-approved work.

April 3, 1985 – Letter from neighbor to CHAP reporting that front marble stairs were repaired using grey cement instead of matching white mortar.

April 13, 1985 – Violation notice issued to owner for above.

February 7, 2018 – Authorization to Proceed issued for rehabilitation work including repair and installation of windows at front and rear, painting, tuck pointing, roof repair, wood fence construction.

PROPOSAL & APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

The applicant proposes to demolish the building at the rear of 1326 Hollins Street (1327 Booth Street) “to create a parking pad located on the footprint of the structure, as well as a landscaped backyard surrounded by a wooden fence to match all of the adjoining properties. This plan, if effectuated, will change an existing eyesore and nuisance into something that will enhance and beautify the existing house at the front of the property, the alley and the neighborhood....”

Staff applied Section 3.6 Demolition Procedures of the *Baltimore City Historic Preservation Rules and Regulations*, specifically “Demolition Hearing One—Determination of Architectural Significance”, which states the following:

3.6 DEMOLITION HEARING ONE-DETERMINATION OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The first step in the demolition review process is a public hearing to determine if the building contributes to a local historic district or continues to meet standards for designation as a local landmark. At this hearing staff shall present the following:

1. The historical and/or architectural significance of the property;
2. The history of all structures on the property including the approximate dates of additions and significant alterations;
3. A determination of the historical and/or architectural significance of a structure’s additions, significant alterations, or ancillary buildings; and
4. Application of criteria for designation (see 2.1) to the structure in question.

A determination regarding the significance of the structure will be made prior to considering details of the demolition and hardship application, and any projects for new construction on the site. Doing so allows the Commission to determine the importance of the structure solely upon architectural and historical criteria. If a structure does not meet the criteria or contribute to the historic character of a local district, then an Authorization to Proceed for demolition shall be issued.

Architectural Significance and History of Structure

According to the 1890 Sanborn map, the south side of this section of Booth Street was comprised of this building at 1327, four outbuildings (likely carriage houses), and the pair of two-story buildings at 1305 and 1307 Booth Street (*Images 13 & 14*). This remained the same ten years later, and into the 1970s (*Images 15-16*). Today, the outbuildings at the middle of the block are gone, but the pair of buildings at the Carey Street end of the block survive, along with 1327 Booth at the Calhoun Street end. The three rowhouses that once stood on Calhoun Street at the entrance to this Booth Street block—9, 11, and 13 S. Calhoun—have been demolished. 11 and 13 S. Calhoun were demolished in the last few years, and as of this year a board fence surrounds those two properties (*Images 17 & 18*). 1327 Booth Street appears to have always been a stand-alone residence and not a carriage house, given the appearance of the masonry openings on the front, and the existence of the basement windows. It's a unique free-standing survivor that has stood on this block for over 100 years.

2.2 CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATING DISTRICTS AND LANDMARKS

...[T]he Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation will apply the following criteria in relation to the procedures for historic district and landmark designation....

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The quality of significance in Baltimore history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, public interiors, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

1. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Baltimore history; or
2. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in Baltimore's past; or
3. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
4. That have yielded or may be likely to yield information important in Baltimore prehistory or history.

Present Conditions and Application of Criteria for Designation

The applicant provided interior photographs of the building (*Images 19-21*). The applicant also provided a statement from James D. Plowden, Jr. PE, Principal of Plowden Engineering which reads in part:

...I understand that the interior framing has collapsed, thus allowing moisture to do further damage. The front and west walls are mostly visible and their exterior face brick is in reasonable condition. The east wall is covered with parging and the brickwork is not visible. The rear of the building is encased in vegetation...

I will address what is needed to structurally restore this building. No attempt to list architectural, plumbing, electrical, etc. needing replacement is included.

1. Temporarily brace the existing walls until the new framing is complete and properly tied to the walls.

2. Repoint the masonry inside and out. Replace any damaged brick. Place steel such as brick ties in the horizontal joists of the bricks (@ 16" o/c vertically) at any vertical or stair step cracks. Remove the parging and the vegetation for closer review.
 3. Replace the floors and roof with new framing. Provide a positive tie to the exterior walls.
 4. The steps are slightly separated from the building. I recommend replacing them.
 5. I suspect there is no waterproofing on the foundation walls. The basement walls should be checked for structural soundness. If waterproofing is needed, placing it may be difficult, especially on the east side, since this appears adjacent to the 1324 property.
- James D. Plowden, Jr. PE, May 23, 2018

Staff applied Criterion 3 in assessing the property. While this clearly is not a high-style building, it is a unique type for the Union Square historic district. It is a single building on an alley street built likely as a residence. It has stood by itself since the late 19th century. It has simple detailing, such as a simple masonry cornice and masonry lintels above the second floor windows. It clearly is not in good shape, having endured a fire that destroyed much of the interior. Yet, it does not appear to be in imminent danger of collapse. One could argue that Booth Street can afford to lose this building, since this block has only a pair of other residential buildings in the block and little more. Alternatively, staff considers the rarity of this simple building to be its strength, and maintains that it is a distinctive type under Criterion 3 and therefore is a contributing building of architectural integrity.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Union Square Association has been notified of the proposal, and has expressed support for the demolition application.

ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATION

CHAP staff finds that 1327 Booth Street maintains architectural integrity and per Criterion 3 represents a distinctive type in the Union Square Historic District.



Eric Holcomb
Director

MAP AND IMAGES

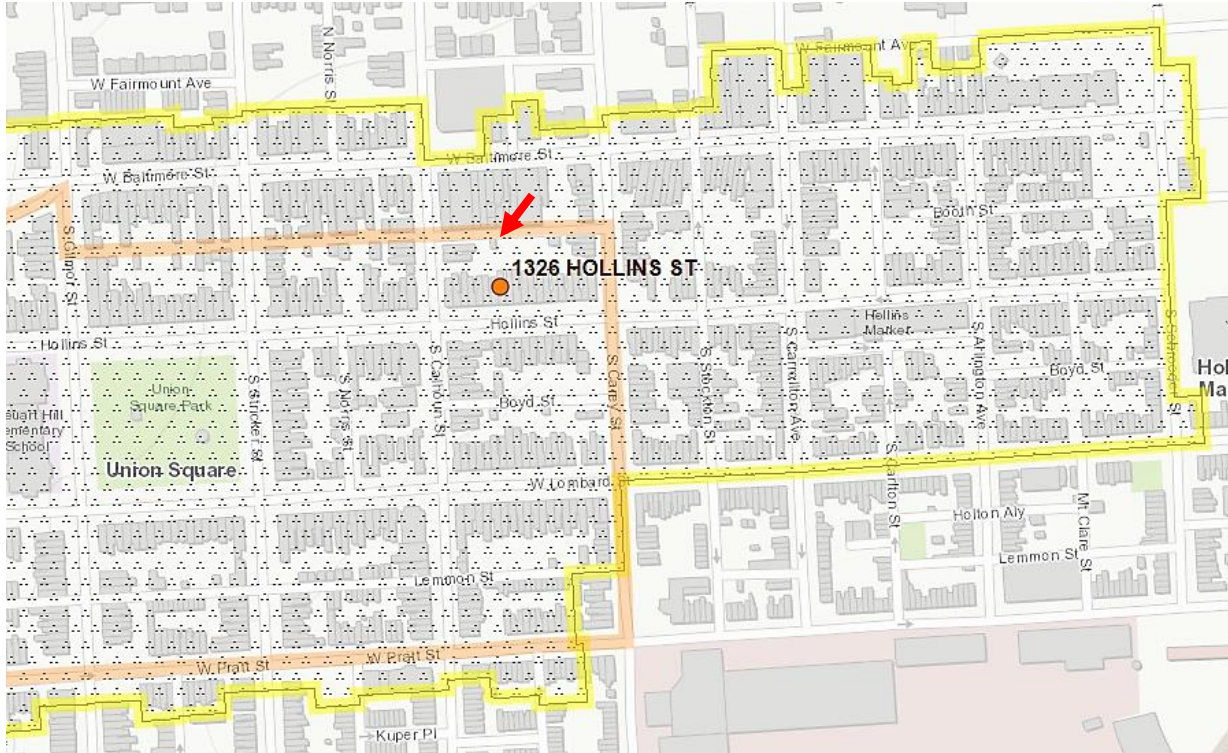


Image 1– 1326 Hollins Street in the Union Square Historic District (bright yellow outline). Rear building, 1327 Booth Street, at arrow.



Image 2: Aerial view of 1327 Booth Street from south, December 22, 2017



Image 3: Aerial view of 1327 Booth Street from north, December 22, 2017



Image 4: Overhead view of 1327 Booth Street, December 22, 2017



Image 5: Looking east on Booth Street, May 10, 2018



Image 6: Looking west on Booth Street, May 10, 2018



Image 7: 1327 Booth Street, May 10, 2018



Image 8: 1327 Booth Street, rear, June 4, 2018

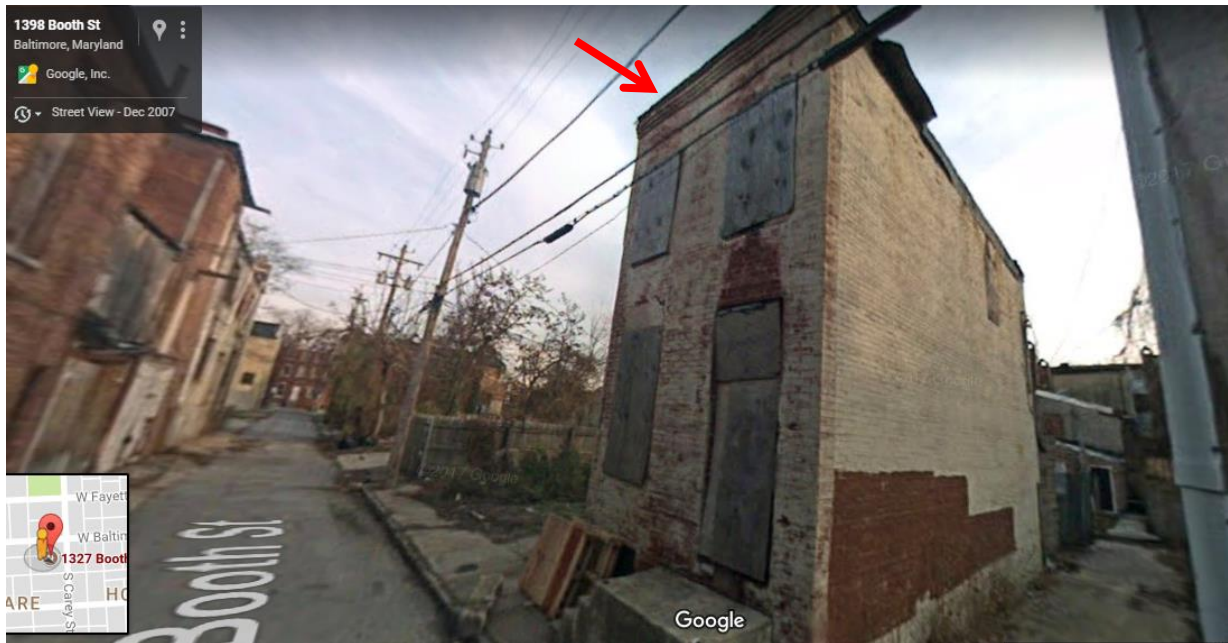


Image 9: 1327 Booth Street, Google Street View, December 2007



Image 10: Looking east on Booth Street approaching S. Carey Street (1305, 1307 Booth Street), June 4, 2018



Image 11: Buildings on north side of Booth Street opposite 1327 Booth Street, looking west, May 10, 2018



Image 12: Buildings on north side of 1300 block of Booth Street looking east, May 10, 2018

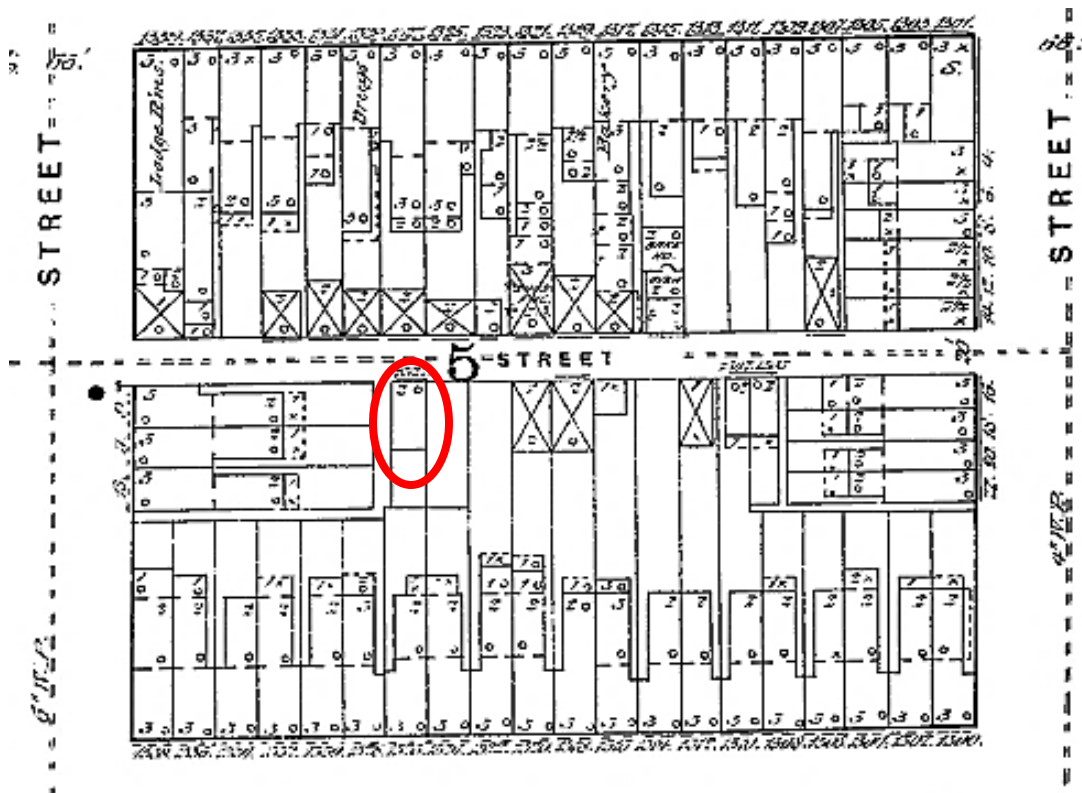


Image 13: Sanborn Map, 1890, 1327 Booth Street

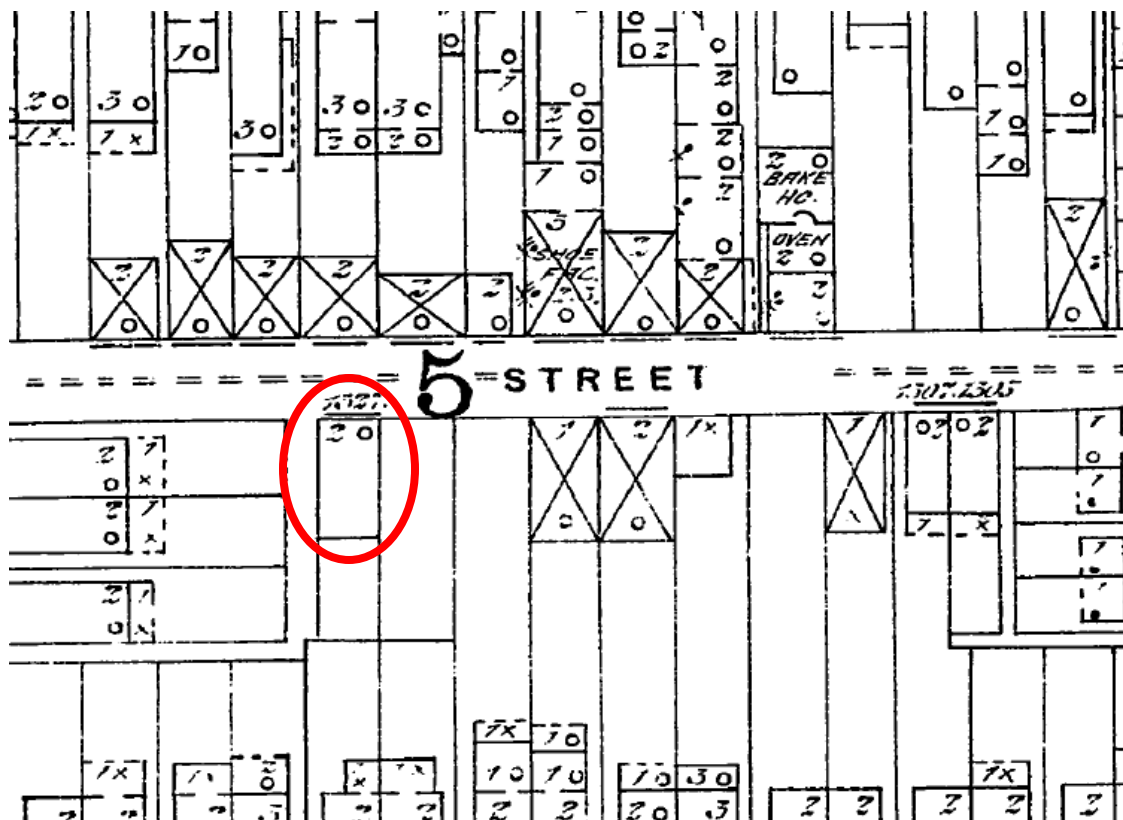


Image 14: Sanborn Map, 1890 (Detail), 1327 Booth Street

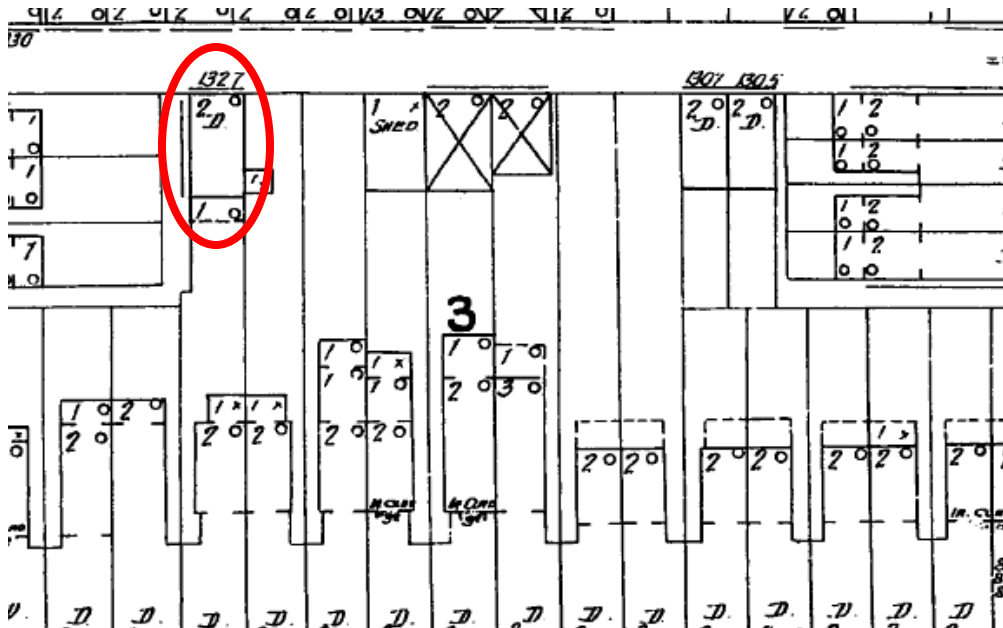


Image 15: Sanborn Map, 1901-02 (Detail)

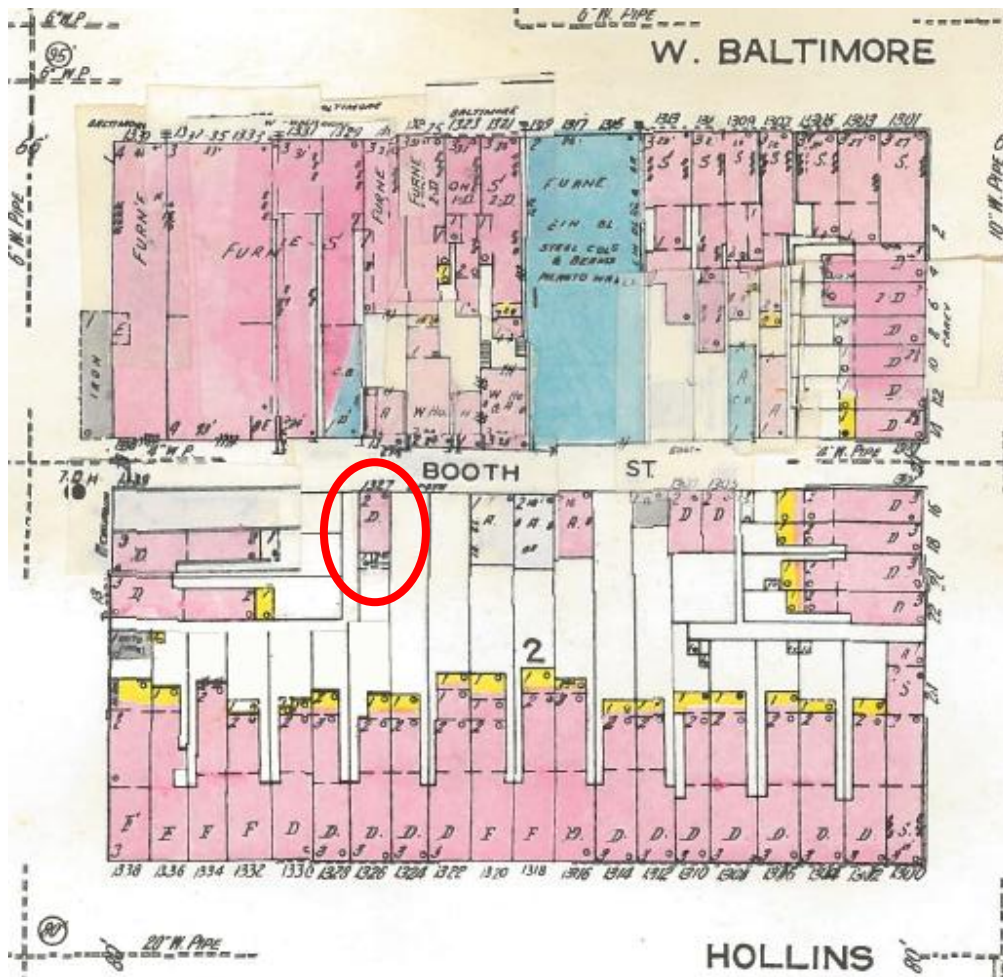


Image 16: Sanborn Map, 1971, 1327 Booth Street



Image 17: Looking east on Booth Street from S. Calhoun Street, Google Street View, December 2007



Image 18: Looking east on Booth Street from S. Calhoun Street, May 10, 2018



Image 19: 1327 Booth Street – first floor interior, June 2018.



Image 20: 1327 Booth Street – interior, June 2018



Image 21: 1327 Booth Street – interior, June 2018